

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Spirit Tap Upgrade

**Project No.:** P03021

**Project Manager:** Victor Hitchens

**Location:** Stevens County, WA

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B.4.13 Upgrading and rebuilding existing powerlines

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) plans to modify structures on its Spirit Tap to Colville-Boundary transmission line where it enters Avista's Spirit Substation and to replace two aging wood-pole structures on the same line. The work would ensure connection of BPA's line to a new transformer Avista plans to install at their Spirit Substation in Stevens County, Washington.

Avista plans to replace an existing 3 MVA transformer at their Spirit Substation with a larger transformer to address normal winter peak load growth in the area. Spirit Substation is served by BPA's Spirit tap to Colville-Boundary 115-kV transmission line (SPIRT-COBO) with no other transmission or distribution sources (radial feed). BPA would move the final span of its transmission line to the south to connect to the new transformer location.

The work would include installation of one new 3-pole deadend structure with guy wires approximately 75 feet back-on-line from existing structure 6/5. This new structure would be the new 6/5. One span of conductor and overhead groundwire would be installed from the new 6/5 to the new Avista Substation deadend structure. The existing 6/5 and 6/6 would temporarily be left in place along with the conductor and groundwire to keep Spirit Substation energized while the new transformer "soaks". This "soaking" process should only take a couple of days. Once complete the existing 6/5 and 6/6 would be removed along with the existing conductor and groundwire.

About 0.15 acres of right-of-way would be acquired and up to 0.28 acres of right-of way would be retired where the line span would be moved. There would be approximately 12 trees removed in the new right-of-way location.

BPA would also replace two aging wood-pole structures to limit potential outages on the Spirit tap line since it is a radial line. Structures 5/4 and 6/4 would be replaced due to the age of the wood poles and hardware. Structure 5/4 is a 3-pole structure with guy wires; the entire structure would be replaced with a new 3-pole structure. Structure 6/4 is a 2-pole deadend with guys and would be replaced with a new 2-pole suspension structure approximately 50 feet ahead on line.

**Findings:** In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) of the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, July 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- (2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- (3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Christopher H. Furey

Christopher H. Furey

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: October 31, 2018

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

# Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist documents environmental considerations for the proposed project and explains why the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

**Proposed Action:** Spirit Tap Upgrade

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## Project Site Description

The Spirit Tap Upgrade would be on maintained BPA right-of-way and area adjacent to the Aladdin Road and Avista's Spirit Substation. The project area consists of right-of-way land maintained with low growing grasses and some evergreen trees at the edges of the right-of-way. An adjacent area of 0.15 acres with low grasses and some trees would be added as new right-of-way to accommodate the new transmission span 75 feet south of the existing location. The surrounding topography consists of uplands with neighboring parcels comprised of forested areas and rural homesites. A review of the National Wetland Inventory, soil information, topography, and aerial photos did not reveal any wetlands or waterbodies at the site. South Fork Deep Creek is located over 500 feet to the west and Little Smackout Creek is located approximately 1400 feet to the northeast of the project location.

## Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. <b>Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> BPA archaeologist reviewed proposed activities and determined that these activities at the project area do not have potential to cause effects to historic or cultural resources.		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There would be minimal soil disturbance for installation of the new poles and for supporting wires. Some digging expected to establish poles. Work is occurring in established BPA right-of-way, 0.15 acres to be secured as right-of-way and across Aladdin Road to connect BPA line with Avista's Spirit Substation.		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The project would be occurring primarily in the BPA right-of-way that is currently managed for low-growing vegetation. There are no listed or special-status species present. Some trees would be expected to cut and be removed for installation of the transmission span to be located 75 feet south of the current location.		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The project would be occurring in the BPA right-of-way that is currently managed for low-growing vegetation. There are no listed or special-status species present.		
5. <b>Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish</b> (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The nearest water body is South Fork Deep Creek, which is located approximately 500 feet west of the project location. The vehicles for the project would be on paved and dirt roads or in right-of-way area without impact to the creek.		

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No wetlands are present at the project location. A freshwater forested wetland is located about 500 feet west of the primary project location. Trucks would access the project areas using existing access roads and will avoid South Fork Deep Creek and any wetland areas adjacent to the creek and west of the project location.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The digging to install the poles and supporting guy wires for this transmission project would be too shallow to impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. **Land Use and Specially Designated Areas**



Explanation: The installation of the poles for this project would not impact land use or specially designated areas.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: There would be limited visual changes to the project area or surrounding environment due to the movement of the transmission span and replacement of transmission poles. Replacement wood poles would have similar visual qualities of existing wood poles.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during installation.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. No ongoing noise increase is expected.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No direct impact.

### Evaluation of Other Integral Elements

The proposed project would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusion. The project would not:

- Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the

National Institutes of Health.

Explanation, if necessary:

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**Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: BPA Realty is in coordination with landowner to secure 0.15 acres of additional right-of-way and retire approximately 0.28 acres of existing right-of-way. BPA Transmission in coordination with Avista to schedule outages and connection of transmission line.

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Based on the foregoing, this proposed project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts to any environmentally sensitive resource.

Signed: /s/ Christopher H. Furey  
Christopher H. Furey, ECT-4

Date: October 31, 2018